
NORTH CAROLINA MUSEUM OF LIFE AND SCIENCE

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The North Carolina Museum of Life and Science cultivates discovery of the natural and physical sciences by the citizens of Durham County. As a combined science center, nature center and zoo housed on a 70-acre campus, the Museum is in a unique position to incorporate the principles of scientific inquiry in exhibits and programs that instill life long learners of all ages with a love of science.

The Museum is dedicated to furthering education with a mission that translates into five institutional goals:

- to provide opportunities for informal science learning.
- to maintain an inviting, informal facility offering a variety of experiences.
- to invite and welcome a wide and diverse audience.
- to be a resource for the community and its related institutions.
- to strive for excellence and innovation in our exhibits and programs.

The Museum is half way through its most ambitious and exciting initiatives. *BioQuest* will transform the Museum to become the first science center to link people with plants, animals, and interactive exhibits in the out-of-doors. The Museum partnered with Duke University's Primate Center, the National Zoo in Washington, and other museums and zoos across the nation to pilot unique exhibitions that will stir Durham County residents, serve as a national model for other institutions, and attract tourist.

Magic Wings Butterfly House opened to the general public in April 1999. The three-story glass Tropical Butterfly Conservatory with 1000 exotic butterflies from Africa, Asia, Central and South America presents outstanding opportunities for expanded environmental and conservation education.

The *Insectarium* opened in March 2000 to the general public. Located in the Butterfly House building, this is a permanent one-of-a-kind exhibition that makes insect exploration a larger-than-life experience. It will feature more than 25 live exotic and native species of insects and insect predators.

Capital improvements for Phase II of the *BioQuest* project was funded through \$5.8 million of general

obligation bonds approved by the citizens of Durham County in November 2001. It is anticipated that this Phase II will open in the spring of 2004. The Museum has requested an additional \$5.18 million to complete the total *BioQuest* project. This project will be part of the proposed bond referendum in November 2003.

The *BioQuest* expansion will complete major outdoor exhibits called *Catch the Wind* and *Down to Earth*, which will open in 2004. *Catch the Wind* will allow teachers, students and families to learn first hand how plants and animals use the aerial environment. *Down to Earth* will allow teachers, students and families to use the tools of wildlife biologists as they enter the world of North Carolina Black Bears, and endangered Red Wolves and lemurs.